

Boosting China Post's information system for maximum efficiency

The combination of HP Integrity Superdome Servers and HP-UX 11i v3 enabled China Post to achieve its IT and business objectives.



With the extensive reformation of China's financial system - coupled with the computerisation and automation of the country's postal financial system - China's current electronic exchange processing system had been unable to support the development of its business operations. In order to adapt to a constantly changing market, optimise its business operations, and improve IT processing capabilities, the China Post Group of Companies decided to construct a nationwide, centralised processing postal exchange system. HP installed a secure, stable, and highly available IT environment that included HP Integrity Superdome Servers as well as the HP-UX 11i v3 operating system.

HP customer case study: China Post chooses HP's Integrity Superdome Server and HP-UX 11i v3 to power its nationwide postal exchange system

Industry: Postal network

Objectives

- Establish a high-performance postal exchange business operating system
- Standardise system management and maintenance
- Implement a stable, scalable, and efficient IT environment

Approach

- Install HP Integrity Superdome Servers and HP-UX 11i v3 as the database, production, and disaster recovery servers for a reengineered postal exchange system

Business technology improvements

- A flexible, accessible, and highly stable centralised postal exchange system has been established

Business outcomes

Accelerate business growth

- High accessibility and performance support the stable growth of business operations
- Simpler management has enabled greater clarity in work processes and has increased staff efficiency

Mitigate risks

- Enhanced business continuity and availability



The China Post Group of Companies (China Post) is a large-scale, state-owned conglomerate that was established following the merger of the original State Post Bureau's subsidiaries. Currently, the company's registered assets amount to some 80 billion yuan. China Post's main businesses include domestic and international delivery and posting of mail, publication and issuance of newspapers and publications, postal exchange/remittance, savings bank services, postal logistics, issuance of postage stamps and others. In accordance with Chinese regulations, the company provides special services, such as confidential, business, and military communications in addition to general postal services.

China Post has already established an integrated computerised postal network that covers 236 central cities around the entire country, connecting nearly 30,000 electronic and computerised satellite exchange network points. The network promotes voice, image, and data communications, and supports a large number of postal operations. The company's facilities are advanced in terms of performance, scope of coverage, and network capabilities. The postal information system is currently being upgraded for enhanced security and management analysis.

Customer solution at a glance

A robust, flexible platform to support an improved postal exchange/remittance system

Primary applications

- Postal savings system, postal satellite exchange system, and databases

Primary hardware

- Two HP Integrity Superdome Servers

Primary software

- HP-UX 11i v3
- HP hard partitions (nPars)
- HP Serviceguard
- Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC)
- BEA TUXEDO middle

The need for better information management system performance and a computerised postal exchange/remittance system

With China's rapid economic development, great demands have been placed on the speed and flexibility of many businesses. In turn, various banks and financial institutions have been actively fine-tuning their business management strategies and diversifying into the individual settlement business operations market. This has attracted more competitors, forcing existing banks to introduce various forms of individual computerised exchange/remittance systems.

Against this backdrop, China Post faces a potential yet massive threat to its survival if the company does not attempt to upgrade its outdated manual processing, mail route transportation, and capital settlement processes. If the company aims to expand its market share, it must adopt modern and high-tech means to computerise the processing of its exchange/remittance operations, fund settlement, and accounting. Through automation, the company stands to benefit from simpler procedures, shorter delivery times, faster settlement of funds, and higher competitiveness. In addition, China Post can better meet the needs of its customers.

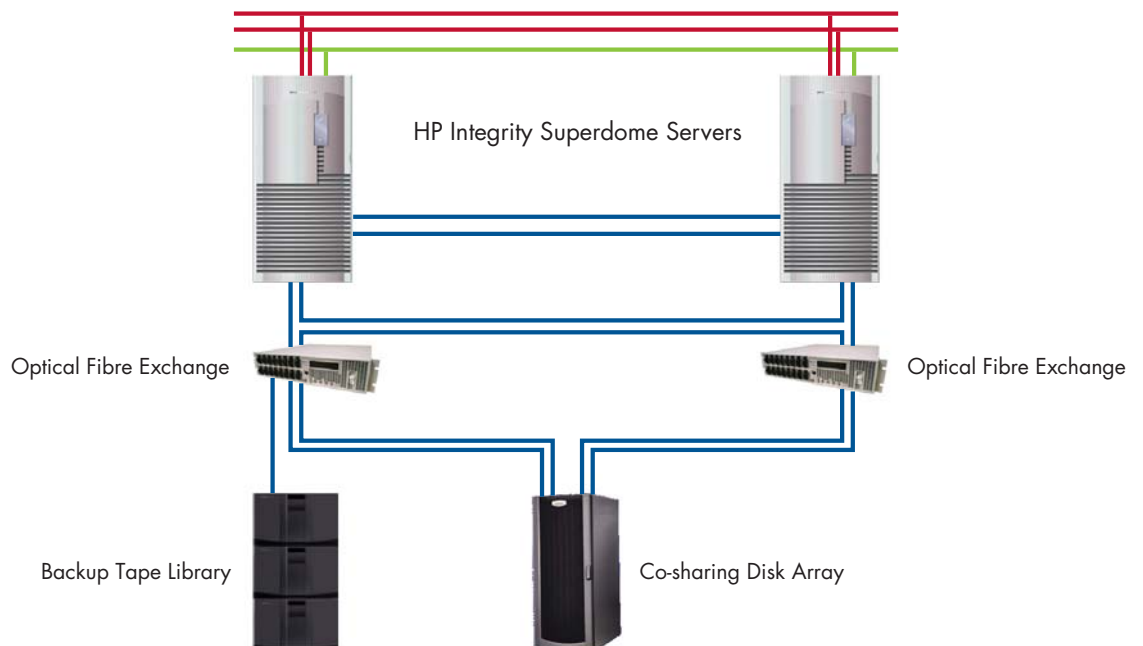
China Post decided to overhaul its legacy exchange/remittance system and establish a new, high-performance postal exchange/remittance system. At the same time, China Post plans to consolidate all the core facilities of the current postal exchange/remittance business operating system throughout China into a centralised machine room, standardising management and maintenance. China Post also plans to install new hardware, expand hardware capacity, and consolidate its IT architecture for better distribution and co-sharing of its facilities and resources across China.

HP's solution: HP Integrity Superdome Servers and HP-UX 11i v3

HP installed HP Integrity Superdome Servers as the database, production, and crisis centre servers. Each HP Integrity Superdome Server is divided into two electrically isolated hardware partitions and operates using Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC), forming dual-machine hot backup and dual-machine mutual backup clusters. During normal operations, the database runs via two servers providing load balancing. Should a fault arise in any one of these two servers, database processing will be automatically taken over by the other server. By consolidating numerous types of applications (database, applications, etc.) into a single server, China Post stands to gain from:

1. Simpler management
2. Higher usage rate of system resources
3. Lower total cost of ownership
4. Greater system flexibility
5. Scalability

Diagram of China Post's new postal exchange/remittance business operations system



All of the HP Integrity Superdome Servers run HP-UX 11i v3, an enterprise-edition, multi-thread, and 64-bit operating system. HP-UX 11i v3, designed for mission-critical applications, complements the HP Integrity architecture with unparalleled levels of expandability, reliability, manageability, functionality, and security.

In addition, HP-UX 11i v3 enables the flexible configuration of capacity through a full suite of integrated features that operates as a single system. This simplifies IT management and enables the automation of complex tasks. When China Post's data needs grow in the future, workloads can be scaled on HP-UX 11i v3 to meet demand. These features enable China Post's IT staff to focus more of their time on business activities and less on IT issues.

Why HP?

In accordance with the new IT system's business planning requirements, HP decided to install open, high-performance, and robust HP Integrity Superdome Servers. The combination of the HP Integrity Superdome Server and HP-UX 11i v3 enable China Post to continuously take advantage of the latest technologies engineered for excellent scalability, mainframe-class availability, and proven performance.

The new system also had to possess a high degree of flexibility and accessibility. On this note, the HP Integrity Superdome Server is capable of supporting multiple operating systems – including HP-UX 11i v3, Linux, OpenVMS, and Microsoft Windows – and is certified for a host of applications. In addition, numerous HP Integrity Superdome features improve the security, reliability, stability, openness, and scalability of China Post's infrastructure, satisfying the IT and business requirements of the company.

More importantly, HP Integrity Superdome Servers incorporate the Intel® Itanium® processor framework, which is also built on an open standards architecture. As a result of this, HP is able to unite offerings from industry-leading manufacturers such as Intel and Oracle, and provide China Post the most advantageous solutions.

In addition, HP's space-efficient machines see extensive usage in China's mail storage system. The HP Integrity Superdome Server and HP-UX 11i v3 platform completely support the standardised version of the provincial postal savings system, the computerised postal satellite exchange system, the BEA TUXEDO middleware, and the Oracle database. Therefore, choosing HP Integrity Superdome Servers mitigates the risks associated with migrating China Post's exchange/remittance system.

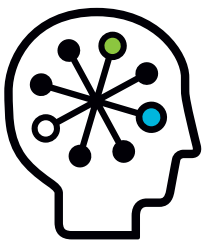
A stable system ensures steady business growth

So far, application performance on the HP Integrity Superdome Server for China Post's nationwide, large-scale, and centralised exchange/remittance processing projects has proved exceptional.

"The performance of the HP Integrity Superdome Server is outstanding and has supplied the company with a number of advantages, such as excellent 64-bit application capabilities and easy deployment. The HP Integrity technology also caters to China Post's postal users who are planning to reduce their operational outlays with more choices, eliminate old RISC-based units or large-scale platforms, and consolidate multiple independent servers."

China Post

In reality, HP solutions raised the standards of establishing an information system in China. China Post hopes that it can gain even greater support from leading IT manufacturers like HP in the future during the postal reengineering process to achieve total automation.



Technology for better business outcomes

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